

Introduced by Senator Steinberg

March 22, 2010

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 91—Relative to Autism Awareness Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 91, as introduced, Steinberg. Autism Awareness Month.

This measure would designate April 2010 as Autism Awareness Month, would recognize and commend the parents and relatives of individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) for their sacrifice and dedication in providing for the special needs of individuals with ASDs, would express support for the work of the Senate Select Committee on Autism and Related Disorders, members of regional autism taskforces, and the Statewide Coordinating Council of Autism Taskforces, and recognize and commend the work of certain ASD programs.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, Autism is a complex neurobiological disorder that
- 2 typically lasts throughout a person's lifetime. Autism is part of a
- 3 group of disorders known as autism spectrum disorders (ASDs);
- 4 and
- 5 WHEREAS, ASDs are neurodevelopmental disorders of
- 6 unknown etiology that may cause significant impairments in
- 7 language, communications, and social interactions, abnormalities
- 8 in behaviors, and other physical manifestations; and
- 9 WHEREAS, ASDs are abnormalities of brain development and
- 10 function that are typically diagnosed during the first three years
- 11 of life, are four times more likely to occur in males than females,

1 and impact all segments of California’s population regardless of
2 race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or other factors; and

3 WHEREAS, ASDs now impact one out of every 100 children
4 in the United States and are the fastest growing serious
5 developmental disability, making these disorders more common
6 than pediatric cancer, diabetes, and acquired immunodeficiency
7 syndrome (AIDS) combined; and

8 WHEREAS, Most school districts in California have seen a
9 doubling of students with ASDs in the past five years. The number
10 of Californians with ASDs who are served by the State Department
11 of Developmental Services now exceeds 40,000, which is a number
12 that has more than tripled since 1998 and has increased more than
13 12 times from what it was in 1987; and

14 WHEREAS, Many Californians are not adequately informed
15 about ASDs and the value and importance of early identification,
16 assessment, and treatment of these disorders; and

17 WHEREAS, Parents and family members have made invaluable
18 contributions through their commitment, care, and advocacy to
19 important advances in research, education, and treatment for
20 individuals with ASDs; and

21 WHEREAS, California has been the established leader in
22 providing services and supports for the early identification,
23 assessment, intervention, education, and treatment of individuals
24 with ASDs that began with the passage of landmark state legislation
25 such as the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Service Act of
26 1969 and Assembly Bill 3854 (Chapter 1527 of the Statutes of
27 1974), relating to autism and public education; and

28 WHEREAS, In 2005, Senator Perata authored Senate Concurrent
29 Resolution 51 (Resolution Chapter 124 of the Statutes of 2005)
30 that established, with bipartisan backing, the Legislative Blue
31 Ribbon Commission on Autism; and

32 WHEREAS, In 2007, the Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission
33 on Autism submitted its report, “An Opportunity to Achieve Real
34 Change for Californians with Autism Spectrum Disorders,” which
35 provided specific findings and recommendations to do all of the
36 following:

37 (a) Establish models of integrated, comprehensive services for
38 early identification and intervention of ASDs.

39 (b) Ensure appropriate and equitable coverage for ASDs by
40 private health plans and insurers.

1 (c) Improve access to services and navigating complex systems
2 of care.

3 (d) Prepare teachers and other school-based personnel to educate
4 children with ASDs.

5 (e) Resolve service disputes effectively and equitably.

6 (f) Design new employment and housing strategies for
7 individuals with ASDs.

8 (g) Increase awareness and knowledge of ASDs among law
9 enforcement officers and other first responders; and

10 WHEREAS, In 2008, Senator Steinberg authored Senate
11 Concurrent Resolution 97 (Resolution Chapter 62 of the Statutes
12 of 2008) that proclaimed April 2008 as Autism Awareness Month,
13 and acknowledged the contributions made in the area of early
14 autism and ASD intervention treatment; and

15 WHEREAS, In 2009, Senator Price, who at the time was a
16 member of the Assembly, authored Assembly Concurrent
17 Resolution 53 (Resolution Chapter 30 of the Statutes of 2009) that
18 proclaimed April 2009 as Autism Awareness Month and noted the
19 important sacrifices and dedication that parents and relatives of
20 individuals with ASDs contribute in providing for the special needs
21 of individuals with ASDs; and

22 WHEREAS, In 2009, the Senate Committee on Rules, pursuant
23 to Senate Rule 12.5, established a subcommittee of the General
24 Research Committee known as the Senate Select Committee on
25 Autism and Related Disorders. The Senate Select Committee on
26 Autism and Related Disorders was authorized and directed to do
27 all of the following:

28 (a) Provide a legislative forum for research, analysis,
29 deliberations, and outreach in order to promote policies and
30 legislation to better assist individuals with ASDs and their families.

31 (b) Advance the work of the Legislative Blue Ribbon
32 Commission on Autism.

33 (c) Address the issues that were identified within the 2007–08
34 California Autism Legislative Package, which included Senate
35 Bill 527, Senate Bill 1175, Senate Bill 1364, Senate Bill 1475,
36 Senate Bill 1531, Senate Bill 1563, Assembly Bill 1872, and
37 Assembly Bill 2302 of the 2007–08 Regular Session of the
38 Legislature.

(d) Deal with the fiscal challenges that confront California in providing the necessary and crucial services for individuals with ASDs; and

WHEREAS, The Senate Select Committee on Autism and Related Disorders has appointed regional autism taskforces that are comprised of consumers and their family members, advocates, providers, researchers, and other experts in the area of ASDs, and other stakeholders, to provide assistance to, and to support the work of, the select committee. Senator Steinberg, as Chair of the Senate Select Committee on Autism and Related Disorders, has established the Statewide Coordinating Council of Autism Taskforces that will consist of the chairs and cochairs of the regional autism taskforces and will meet periodically to review the input from all of the regional autism taskforces and develop integrated recommendations for consideration by the Senate Select Committee on Autism and Related Disorders; and

WHEREAS, Public information and awareness efforts are of paramount importance in accelerating early identification efforts and the proliferation of early intervention programs and services; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature designates April 2010 as Autism Awareness Month; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature recognizes and commends the parents and relatives of individuals with ASDs for their sacrifice and dedication in providing for the special needs of individuals with ASDs; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature expresses its support for the work of the Senate Select Committee on Autism and Related Disorders, the members of the regional autism taskforces, and the Statewide Coordinating Council of Autism Taskforces; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature recognizes and commends the work of The Help Group, the Special Needs Network, the Autism Society of America, Autism Speaks, Families for Early Autism Treatment (FEAT), Disability Rights California, California Association for Behavior Analysis, Autism Behavioural Intervention Association, and other nonprofit organizations that are contributing to the well-being of individuals with autism and their families; and be it further

- 1 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
- 2 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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